

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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ICA-11 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 HA-05
HEW-04 AGRE-00 /099 W
-----112190 161408Z /53

R 161210Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8411
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 2214

BRUSSELS FOR NAVEZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EINV, PEPR, ET, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN MISSION TO ETHIOPIA; MAY 9-12, 1978

SUMMARY: ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF LAST WEEK'S MISSION TO ETHIOPIA HEADED BY UNDER SECRETARY RADI, PARTICULARLY IN CONTEXT OF OTHER RECENT SIGNALS TO FRANCE AND U.S. THAT ETHIOPIA IS INTERESTED IN RELAXING TENSION WITH WESTERN POWERS. WHILE ETHIOPIANS WERE CORDIAL AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, MIDDLE-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS RANCOROUSLY TRIED TO UPSET TALKS BY INTRUDING EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES SUCH AS DEMANDS THAT ITALIANS FOLLOW ETHIOPIAN LEAD IN VARIOUS CONDEMNATIONS. BIGGEST PROBLEM AROSE OVER ETHIOPIAN DEMAND FOR AND ITALIAN REFUSAL TO INCLUDE PHRASE CONDEMNING ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE. OUTCOME AND GENERAL TENOR OF TALKS REINFORCES OUR OWN ANALYSIS THAT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY TRYING, AT LEAST FOR TACTICAL REASONS, TO IMPROVE TIES WITH WESTERN POWERS. OF MORE CONCRETE INTEREST TO US IS ETHIOPIAN REAFFIRMATION OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED PROPERTIES. END SUMMARY.

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TION OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED PROPERTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR MARCELLO GUIDI SUMMED UP RESULTS OF LAST WEEK'S ITALIAN MISSION AS "ON THE WHOLE, POSITIVE" DURING LONG BRIEFING PROVIDED CHARGE MAY 15. HE STARTED BY RECALLING THAT MISSION, AT FOREIGN

MINISTRY UNDER SECRETARY LEVEL, HAD BEEN ON-AGAIN, OFF-
AGAIN EVER SINCE SEPTEMBER 1975 FOLLOWING VISIT OF A
TECHNICAL MISSION. BECAUSE OF EVENTS, PARTIALLY IN
ITALY, BUT MAINLY IN ETHIOPIA, SUCH AS MENGISTU'S COUP
AGAINST TEFERI BANTE, IDEA OF MISSION HAD LAIN DORMANT
UNTIL ETHIOPIAN MOFA PERMSEC DAWIT RAISED IT WITH ITALIAN
FONMIN FORLANI LAST FALL DURING PERIOD OF RELAXATION OF
TENSIONS WITH WEST. THEN RED TERROR CAMPAIGN STARTED
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, AND MISSION WAS AGAIN
SHELVED BY GOI.

2. GUIDI, WHO FOUND FORLANI STRONGLY OPPOSED TO MISSION
DURING HIS MARCH CONSULTATIONS IN ROME, TAKES CREDIT FOR
GETTING PALAZZO FARNESINA TO REINSTATE MISSION. ORIGINALLY
SCHEDULED TO CONCENTRATE ON MATTERS OF ITALIAN COMMUNITY
IN ETHIOPIA AND ETHIOPIAN ONE IN ITALY, MISSION WAS GIVEN
MORE POLITICAL CAST, PRETTY MUCH AT LAST MOMENT, BY SWITCH
IN CHOICE OF UNDER SECRETARY -- RADI INSTEAD OF FOSCHI --
TO LEAD IT. ALTHOUGH COMMUNIQUE, SUMMARIZED BELOW, TOUCHES
ON ISSUES CONCERNING ITALIANS IN ETHIOPIA, GUIDI SAID THAT
ETHIOPIAN COMMITMENTS WERE EXTREMELY VAGUE AND ONLY
ESTABLISHED BASIS FOR MORE SATISFACTORY TALKS IN FUTURE.

3. GUIDI SAID THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED UNTIL DAY
OF MISSION'S ARRIVAL THAT CONCURRENT MISSION, LED BY
FOSCHI, WAS IN SOMALIA. THIS TOOK SOME OF BLOOM OFF
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ETHIOPIAN RECEPTION, BUT ALL IN ALL NOT MUCH HARM WAS DONE
FROM ADDIS PERSPECTIVE, GUIDI BELIEVES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 2214

BRUSSELS FOR NAVEZ

4. FIRST BILATERAL MEETING, HELD AFTERNOON MAY 9 AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WAS DEVOTED MAINLY TO PLEASANTRIES ON BOTH SIDES. FOREIGN MINISTER FELEKE SURPRISED ALL BY REMARKING THAT MISSION COULD NOT HAVE COME TO ADDIS A FEW MONTHS AGO BECAUSE OF SHOOTINGS IN STREETS, GENERAL INSECURITY, ETC. ITALIANS CONCENTRATED ON ASSURING ETHIOPIANS THAT ECONOMIC SYSTEM WAS PURELY INTERNAL AFFAIR AND HOPING THAT ITALIAN COMMUNITY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT HARASSMENT OR TO LEAVE PEACEABLY.

5. ITALIAN SIDE HAD DECIDED TO HOLD OFF, UNTIL LATER INTO MISSION, ON WHETHER OR NOT TO SEEK SESSION WITH PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (DIRG) CHAIRMAN MENGISTU. DECISION WAS PRE-EMPTED BY ANNOUNCEMENT DURING FIRST MEETING THAT PMAC MEMBER IN CHARGE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS 2ND LT. GESSESSE WORLDE-KIDAN WOULD RECEIVE GROUP. GESSESSE EXPLAINED HE WAS RECEIVING DELEGATION IN PLACE OF CHAIRMAN WHO WAS, IN FACT, PREPARING TO LEAVE NEXT DAY FOR OGADEN. TO ITALIANS' SURPRISE, GESSESSE WAS EFFUSIVE
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IN HIS PRAISE OF ITALY. EVERYTHING MODERN IN ETHIOPIA IT OWED TO ITALY -- ROADS, TECHNICIANS, ETC. -- AND, MOREOVER, ITALY'S POSITION DURING RECENT OGADEN WAR WAS PERFECT. (EMBASSY COMMENT: BASICALLY GOI AVOIDED TAKING STAND.) THERE WERE NO RECRIMINATIONS AT THIS POINT, AND GESSESSE, SEEMINGLY OUT OF CHARACTER, EMBRACED RADI WARMLY UPON LATTER'S TAKING LEAVE. (OUR BIO RECORDS SHOW HIM AS VOCAL MARXIST-LENINIST WITH REPUTATION FOR CRUELTY AND SUPPORTER OF MERCILESS KILLINGS.)

6. NEXT DAY'S MEETING WITH FONMIN FELEKE AND PRMSEC DAWIT CONTINUED IN THIS CORDIAL VEIN, BUT TROUBLE STARTED IN THE TWO SUB-COMMISSIONS, THE ONE ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION HEADED BY DEPUTY PLANNING COMMISSIONER ADDIS ANTENEH AND THE OTHER ON COMMUNITIES BY MOFA EUROPE DIVISION HEAD WENDWOSSEN HAILU. BOTH BERATED ITALIANS FOR NOT CONDEMNING SOMALIA, APARTHEID AND IAN SMITH, ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS, ETC. ITALIANS, AFTER MUCH EFFORT, FINALLY PERSUADED ETHIOPIANS TO LIMIT TALKS TO ISSUES AT

HAND, NOT GREAT POLITICAL ONES, AND GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS.

7. WORST PROBLEM AROSE MAY 11 IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE. FIRST DRAFT, SUBMITTED BY ETHIOPIAN SIDE, WAS FULL OF RHETORIC TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO ITALIANS. ETHIOPIANS THEN ACCEPTED ITALIAN DRAFT AS WORKING PAPER. WHEN DAWIT GOT BACK TO THEM BY TELEPHONE THAT EVENING AFTER LONG DELAY, ITALIANS HAD NO TROUBLE ON A TECHNICAL FINANCIAL MATTER NOR IN INCLUDING CLAUSE ABOUT "RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INVIOABILITY OF STATE FRONTIERS AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES..." HOW- EVER, DAWIT ARGUED LITERALLY FOR HOURS THAT COMMUNIQUE INCLUDE CONDEMNATION OF ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS. BUT
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ITALIANS HELD FIRM -- EVEN SUGGESTED THEY RETURN TO ROME WITHOUT A COMMUNIQUE. GUIDI SAID THAT IT WAS NOT UNTIL HE PERSONALLY WENT TO DAWIT'S HOME, WHERE LATTER COULD NEGOTIATE WITHOUT RADICAL OBSERVERS AROUND, THAT ETHIOPIAN SIDE FINALLY GAVE IN. COMMUNIQUE WAS THEN INITIALED BY DAWIT AND RADI AT AIRPORT FOLLOWING MORNING. AS EXPECTED, LOCAL MEDIA COVERED ONLY THOSE PORTIONS WITH GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO PMGSE AND CONVENIENTLY OMITTED THOSE WHICH WOULD RESOUND TO CREDIT OF ITALY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 2214

BRUSSELS FOR NAVEZ

8. FOLLOWING ARE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS IN COMMUNIQUE, FULL
TEXT OF WHICH EMBASSY IS SUBMITTING BY AIRGRAM:

A. DISCUSSIONS WERE WARM AND FRIENDLY, REFLECTING
"LONG-STANDING AND TRADITIONAL RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN
TWO COUNTRIES";

B. DESIRE FOR FURTHER COOPERATION ON BASIS OF PRINCIPLES OF
RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INVIOABILITY
OF STATE FRONTIERS AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS;

C. ITALIAN RECOGNITION OF REVOLUTION AND CONFIDENCE IT WOULD
BRING ABOUT HIGHER LEVELS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY;

D. FOSTERING OF MUTUAL COMMERCIAL CONTACTS;

E. FURTHER EXTENSION OF ITALIAN CREDIT FACILITIES CONNECTED
WITH NEW SUPPLIES OF ITALIAN SERVICES AND GOODS AND ETHIOPIAN
ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE ALL OUTSTANDING REPAYMENT ISSUES;

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F. FURTHER ITALIAN SUPPLY OF 10 THOUSAND TONS OF CEREALS;

G. ITALIAN MEDICINES AND HUMANITARIAN AID FOR CIVILIAN
VICTIMS OF "RECENT" WAR;

H. ETHIOPIAN REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, COVERING
SECTORS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING
AND AGRICULTURE;

I. GENERAL ITALIAN AGREEMENT TO ABOVE, PARTICULARLY WITH
DISPATCH OF PUBLIC HEALTH PERSONNEL, TEACHERS TO ADDIS ABABA
UNIVERSITY, FELLOWSHIPS, GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT,
ETC.; EXPERTS FOR MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING/
FURTHER STUDY OF AGRICULTURAL REQUESTS BY SPECIAL MISSION.

J. ETHIOPIAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AND WELCOME TO PARTICIPATION
OF ITALIAN NATIONALS IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF
COUNTRY;

K. ITALIAN SATISFACTION WITH ETHIOPIAN COMMITMENT TO PAY
EQUITABLE COMPENSATION TO ITALIAN NATIONALS FOR NATIONALIZED
PROPERTIES;

L. MUTUAL REAFFIRMATION OF RESPECT FOR PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM

OF MOVEMENT OF ITALIAN NATIONALS TO AND FROM ETHIOPIA;

M. ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENT TO EXPEDITE PROCESS OF GRANTING
EXIT AND RE-ENTRY VISAS.

9. EMBASSY WILL EXPLORE ITALIAN ASSISTANCE AND
FINANCIAL CONDITIONS IN GREATER DETAIL AFTER RETURN OF
CHIEF ECONOMIC SECTION.

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